

Bibl. Mont.

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Characters
Continued.

From

Hume, Smollett, Clarendon,

S^c

With the life of Smollett.



Paris.

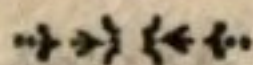
Published

by Parsons and Galignani.

1804.

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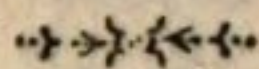
A SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE OF DR. SMOLLETT.

Smollett (Tobias), a physician, historian, novelist, and poet, was born near Cameron, on the banks of the river Leven, in Scotland, 1720. He appears to have received a classical education, and was bred to physic and surgery. He was at the siege of Carthagenas as surgeon, or surgeon's mate; and in his novel of « *Roderick Random*, » has given an account of this expedition. In 1756, he is supposed to have been the editor of « *A Compendium of Authentic Voyages, digested in a Chronological Series*, 7 vols. 12mo.» among which is inserted a short narrative of the expedition to Carthagenas, 1741: which, however, like most of his productions, is written with too much acrimony.

His connection with the sea seems not to have lasted long; and he probably wrote frequently, before he became known by his capital productions. In 1746 and in 1747, he published « *a Satire in two parts*, » which is reprinted among his plays and poems. At eighteen, he had written a tragedy called « *the Regicide*, » founded on the story of the assassination of James I. of Scotland: this he published by subscription in 1749, with a preface; in which he bitterly inveighs against false patrons,

and the duplicity of theatrical managers. In 1757, his comedy of « *the Reprisals*, » an after-piece of two acts, was performed at Drury-Lane Theatre; which, with his tragedy, is printed in the above collection. He had before prepared for Mr. Rich an opera, entitled, « *Alceste*, » which has never been performed, or printed: the music to it was composed by Handel; who, finding that no use was to be made of it, afterwards adapted it to Dryden's lesser *Ode of St. Cecilia's Day*. So much for his Dramatic Works: we now return, and proceed to what entitles him chiefly to notice.

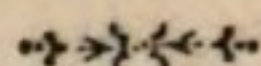
In 1748, he published in 2 vols. 12mo., his novel of « *Roderick Random*, » by which he acquired so much reputation, as almost to insure success to every future production. In 1751, « *Peregrine Pickle* » appeared in 4 vols. 12mo.; a work of much ingenuity and contrivance. This novel, besides its general merit, is distinguished by two striking episodes: one, relating the adventures of a Lady of Quality, whose name is well known; the other, describing the entertainment given a republican Doctor, after the manner of the ancients. Under this personage the late Dr. Akenside is supposed to be typified; and it would be difficult to determine, says his biographer, whether profound learning, or genuine humour predominates most in this Episode. Let us here observe, that Smollett has mixed an uncommon portion of erudition in several of his works. In 1754, were published « *Ferdinand Count Fathom*; » in 1762, « *Sir Launcelot Greaves*, » in



2 vols. 12mo. ; and in 1771, « *Humphry Clinker*, » in 3 vols. 12mo. ; all of them works of great merit, but inferior to the former. In the two first of these productions, the characters are thought to be somewhat extravagant, and the situations often unnatural ; but in the last, which consists of a series of letters, an admirable knowledge of life and manners is displayed, and useful lessons every where intermixed.

Before he took a house at Chelsea, he attempted to settle as practitioner of physic at Bath ; and with that view published, in 1752, a Treatise upon the Waters there ; but not succeeding, he abandoned physic altogether as a profession, and turned his thoughts to writing, as to what he must depend on for support. He translated « *Gil Blas* and *Don Quixote* : » the latter was published 1755, in 2 vols. 4to. ; and, since his death, a translation of « *Telamachus* » has also appeared. His name likewise appears to a translation of *Voltaire's Prose Works*, in which, however, he is supposed to have had little concern. In 1757, he published an « *History of England*, » in 4 vols. 4to., and was employed during the last years of his life, in preparing a new edition of « *the Ancient and Modern Universal History*. » He had originally written some part of this himself, particularly *the Histories of France, Italy, and Germany*.

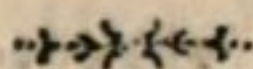
In 1755, he had set on foot « *the Critical Review*, » and continued the principal manager of it till he went abroad for the first time in 1763. This



publication involved him in some controversies, of which the most material to him was that, occasioned by his remarks on a pamphlet of Admiral Knowles, in defence of his conduct on the expedition to Rochfort. The Admiral commenced a prosecution, which ended in Smollett's being fined 100*l.* and condemned to three months imprisonment in the King's-Bench. From the commencement of the Review, he was always considered as the author of it; and thus became frequently censured on account of articles in which he had no concern. He is accused also of having suffered authors to puff themselves, or abuse their adversaries; a conduct which deströys every useful end of such a work.

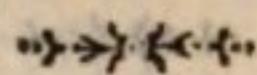
In 1762, when Lord Bute was supposed to have the reins of government in his hands, writers were sought for, to aid and assist him; and among others Dr. Smollett was selected, who, on the 29th of May, of that year, published the first number of « *The Briton.* » This was immediately followed by the publication of « *The North Briton,* » on the opposite side, which, at length, dissolved a friendship that had long subsisted between the authors of these performances. « *The Briton* » continued to be published until Feb. 12, 1763, when it was laid down: yet Dr. Smollett is supposed to have written other pieces in support of the same cause; and the « *Adventures of an Atom,* in two small volumes, » are known to be his productions.

We have already observed that he went abroad in 1763; his health required this, and he continued



two years in France and Italy. He published an *Account of these Travels* 1766, in 2 vols. 8vo.; he was, in his nature, somewhat impatient and acrimonious; but, during his travels, he appears to have laboured under a constant fit of chagrin. His relation of them is actually cynical; and Sterne, in his « *Sentimental Journey*, » has ridiculed him for this, under the character of SMELFUNGUS. But his health continued to decline after his return to England; and this, with other disagreeable circumstances, sent him back to Italy, where he died, Oct. 21, 1771. A monument has been erected to his memory near Leghorn, with an Epitaph written by his friend, Dr. Armstrong, author of « *the Art of Preserving Health, &c.*; » and a pillar, with an inscription on the Banks of the Leven, by James Smollett, of Bonhill, his cousin.

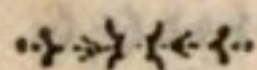
Smollett was one of those ingenious and learned persons, whom Pierius Valerianus would have inserted in his book « *De infelicitate literatorum.* » He had certainly very uncommon powers and attainments, yet never had higher patrons than booksellers. His biographer attributes this to a certain « loftiness and elevation of sentiment, and character which he possessed, » which, as he rightly adds, « are but poor qualifications for currying favour with those who are able to confer favours. » He met too with many mortifications and disappointments: « I am old enough, » says he in a letter to his friend Garrick, « to have seen and observed that we are all play-things of fortune; and that it



depends upon something as insignificant and precarious as the tossing up of a halfpenny, whether a man rises to affluence and honours, or continues to his dying day struggling with the difficulties and disgraces of life.»

With these difficulties and disgraces he had to struggle, and he had not the happiest temperament for such conflicts. In the first letter of his *Travels* he thus expresses his own feelings: « In gratifying your curiosity, I shall find some amusement to beguile the tedious hours; which, without some such employment, would be rendered insupportable by distemper and disquiet. You knew and pitied my situation; traduced by malice, persecuted by faction, abandoned by false patrons, and overwhelmed by the sense of a domestic calamity, which it was not in the power of fortune to repair.» This domestic calamity was the death of a daughter, an only child; and of those false patrons, the chief was Lord Bute; who is said, upon his abdication, « to have entirely neglected all the persons whom he had employed to write for him.»

Upon the whole, this unfortunate man, for such he certainly was, was yet a man of virtue as well as abilities; possessed of good, as well as great qualities; was under many lights amiable, as well as respectable; and who seems to have deserved a better lot. A complete life of Smollett was published by Dr. Anderson in 1796.



CHARACTERS FROM HUME, SMOLLETT, &c.
CONTINUED.

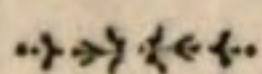
CHARACTER OF MARY.
BY HUME.

It is not necessary to employ many words in drawing the character of this princess. She possessed few qualities either estimable or amiable, and her person was as little engaging as her behaviour and address. Obstinacy, bigotry, violence, cruelty, malignity, revenge, and tyranny; every circumstance of her character took a tincture from her bad temper and narrow understanding. And amidst that complication of vices which entered into her composition, we shall scarcely find any virtue but sincerity; a quality which she seems to have maintained throughout her whole life, except in the beginning of her reign, when the necessity of her affairs obliged her to make some promises to the Protestants, which she certainly never intended to perform. But in those cases a weak bigoted woman, under the government of priests, easily finds casuistry sufficient to justify to herself the violation of an engagement. She appears, as well as her father, to have been susceptible of some attachment of friendship; and that, without caprice and inconstancy, which were so remarkable in the conduct of the monarch. To which we may add, that in many circumstances, of her life, she gave indications of resolution and vigour of mind; a quality which seems to have been inherent in her family.

CHARACTER OF ELIZABETH.

BY HUME.

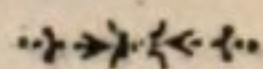
There are few great personages in history who have been more exposed to the calumny of enemies, and the adulation of friends, than Queen Elizabeth; and yet there is scarce any whose reputation has been more certainly determined by the unanimous consent of posterity. The unusual length of her administration, and the strong features of her character, were able to overcome all prejudices; and, obliging her detractors to abate much of their invectives, and her admirers somewhat of their panegyrics, have at last, in spite of political factions, and, what is more, of religious animosities, produced an uniform judgment with regard to her conduct. Her vigour, her constancy, her magnanimity, her penetration, and vigilance, are allowed to merit the highest praise, and appear not to have been surpassed by any person who ever filled a throne: a conduct less vigorous, less imperious; more sincere, more indulgent to her people, would have been requisite to form a perfect character. By the force of her mind, she controlled all her more active and stronger qualities, and prevented them from running into excess: her heroism was exempt from all temerity, her frugality from avarice, her friendship from partiality, her active spirit from turbulence and a vain ambition. She



guarded not herself with equal care, or equal success from lesser infirmities; the rivalship of beauty, the desire of admiration, the jealousy of love, and the sallies of anger.

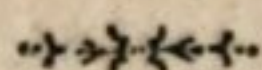
Her singular talents for government were founded equally on her temper and on her capacity. Endowed with a great command over herself, she obtained an uncontrolled ascendant over the people; and while she merited all their esteem by her real virtues, she also engaged their affection by her pretended ones. Few sovereigns of England succeeded to the throne in more difficult circumstances; and none ever conducted the government with such uniform success and felicity. Though unacquainted with the practice of toleration, the true secret for managing religious factions, she preserved her people, by her superior prudence, from those confusions in which theological controversy had involved all the neighbouring nations; and though her enemies were the most powerful princes in Europe, the most active, the most enterprising, the least scrupulous, she was able by her vigour to make deep impressions on their state: her own greatness meanwhile remained untouched and unimpaired.

The wise ministers and brave warriors, who flourished during her reign, share the praise of her success; but, instead of lessening the applause due to her, they make great addition to it: they owed, all of them, their advancement to her choice; they were supported by her constancy; and with all



their ability, they were never able to acquire any undue ascendant over her. In her family, in her court, in her kingdom, she remained equally mistress: the force of the tender passions was great over her, but the force of her mind was still superior; and the combat which her victory visibly cost her, serves only to display the firmness of her resolution, and the loftiness of her ambitious sentiments.

The fame of this princess, though it has surmounted the prejudices both of faction and bigotry, yet lies still exposed to another prejudice, which is more durable, because more natural, and which, according to the different views in which we survey her, is capable either of exalting beyond measure, or diminishing the lustre of her character. This prejudice is founded in consideration of her sex. When we contemplate her as a woman, we are apt to be struck with the highest admiration of her qualities and extensive capacity; but we are also apt to require some more softness of disposition, some greater lenity of temper, some of those amiable weaknesses by which her sex is distinguished. But the true method of estimating her merit, is to lay aside all those considerations, and consider her merely as a rational being, placed in authority, and intrusted with the government of mankind. We may find it difficult to reconcile our fancy to her as a wife, or a mistress; but her qualities as a sovereign, though with some considerable exceptions,



are the object of undisputed applause and approbation.

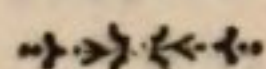
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Thus left unfinished by Hume.

CHARACTER OF ELIZABETH.

BY SMOLLETT.

Elizabeth, in her person, was masculine, tall, straight, and strong-limbed, with an high round forehead, brown eyes, fair complexion, fine white teeth, and yellow hair; she danced with great agility; her voice was strong and shrill; she understood music, and played upon several instruments. She possessed an excellent memory, understood the dead and living languages, made good proficiency in the sciences, and was well read in history. Her conversation was sprightly and agreeable, her judgment solid, her apprehension acute, her application indefatigable, and her courage invincible. She was the great bulwark of the protestant religion; she was highly commendable for her general regard to the impartial administration of justice; and even for her rigid economy, which saved the public money, and evinced that love for her people, which she so warmly professed. Yet she deviated from justice in some instances, when her interest and passions were concerned; and notwithstanding all her great qualities, we cannot deny

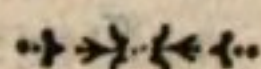


that she was vain, proud, imperious, and in some cases cruel: her predominant passion was jealousy and avarice; though she was also subject to such violent gusts of anger as overwhelmed all regard to the dignity of her station, and even hurried her beyond the common bounds of decency. She was wise and steady in her principles of government, and above all princes fortunate in a ministry.

CHARACTER OF JAMES I.

BY HUME.

No prince, so little enterprizing and so inoffensive, was ever so much exposed to the opposite extremes of calumny and flattery, of satire and panegyric. And the factions which began in his time, being still continued, have made his character be as much disputed to this day, as is commonly that of princes who are our contemporaries. Many virtues, however, it must be owned, he was possessed of; but not one of them pure, or free from the contagion of the neighbouring vices. His generosity bordered on profusion, his learning on pedantry, his pacific disposition on pusillanimity, his wisdom on cunning, his friendship on light fancy and boyish fondness. While he imagined that he was only maintaining his own authority, he may perhaps be suspected in some of his actions, and still more of his pretensions, to have encroached on the liberties of his people.



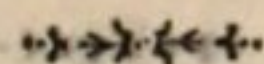
While he endeavoured, by an exact neutrality, to acquire the good-will of all his neighbours, he was able to preserve fully the esteem and regard of none. His capacity was considerable, but fitter to discourse on general maxims, than to conduct any intricate business.

His intentions were just, but more adapted to the conduct of private life, than to the government of kingdoms. Awkward in his person, and ungainly in his manners, he was ill qualified to command respect: partial and undiscerning in his affections, he was little fitted to acquire general love. Of a feeble temper, more than of a frugal judgment; exposed to our ridicule from his vanity, but exempt from our hatred by his freedom from pride and arrogance. And upon the whole, it may be pronounced of his character, that all his qualities were sullied with weakness, and embellished by humanity. Political courage he was certainly devoid of; and from thence chiefly is derived the strong prejudice which prevails against his personal bravery; an inference, however, which must be owned, from general experience, to be extremely fallacious.

CHARACTER OF JAMES.

BY SMOLLETT.

James was in his stature of the middle size, inclining to corpulency; his forehead was high, his beard scanty, and his aspect mean; his eyes, which

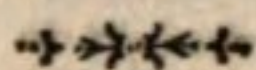


were weak and languid, he rolled about incessantly, as if in quest of novelty; his tongue was so large, that in speaking or drinking, he beslabbered the by-standers; his knees were so weak, as to bend under the weight of his body; his address was awkward, and his appearance slovenly. There was nothing dignified either in the composition of his mind or person. We have in the course of his reign exhibited repeated instances of his ridiculous vanity, prejudices, profusion, folly, and littleness of soul. All that we can add in his favour is, that he was averse to cruelty and injustice; very little addicted to excess, temperate in his meals, kind to his servants, and even desirous of acquiring the love of his subjects, by granting that as a favour, which they claimed as a privilege. His reign, though ignoble to himself, was happy to his people. They were enriched by commerce, which no war interrupted. They felt no severe impositions; and the commons made considerable progress in ascertaining the liberties of the nation.

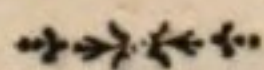
CHARACTER OF JAMES.

BY MACAULAY.

James was of a middle stature, of a fine complexion, and a soft skin; his person plump, but not corpulent, his eyes large and rolling, his beard thin, his tongue too big for his mouth, his countenance disagreeable, his air awkward, and his

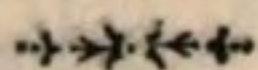


gait remarkably ungraceful, from a weakness in his knees that prevented his walking without assistance; he was tolerably temperate in his diet, but drank of little else than rich and strong wines. His character, from the variety of grotesque qualities that compose it, is not easy to be delineated. The virtues he possessed were so loaded with a greater proportion of their neighbouring vices, that they exhibit no lights, to set off the dark shades; his principles of generosity were tainted by such a childish profusion, that they left him without means of paying his just obligations, and subjected him to the necessity of attempting irregular, illegal, and unjust methods of acquiring money. His friendship, not to give it the name of vice, was directed by so puerile a fancy, and so absurd a caprice, that the objects of it were contemptible, and its consequences attended with such an unmerited profusion of favours, that it was perhaps the most exceptionable quality of any he possessed. His distinctions were formed on principles of selfishness; he valued no person for any endowments that could not be made subservient to his pleasures or his interest; and thus he rarely advanced any man of real worth to preferment. His familiar conversation, both in writing and in speaking, was stuffed with vulgar and indecent phrases. Though proud and arrogant in his temper, and full of the importance of his station, he descended to buffoonery, and suffered his favourites to address him in the most disrespectful terms of gross familiarity.



Himself affected a sententious wit, but rose no higher in those attempts than to quaint, and often stale conceits. His education had been a more learned one than is commonly bestowed on princes; this, from the conceit it gave him, turned out a very disadvantageous circumstance, by contracting his opinions to his own narrow views; his pretences to a consummate knowledge in divinity, politics and the art of governing, exposed him to a high degree of ridicule; his conduct shewing him more than commonly deficient in all these points. His romantic idea of the natural rights of princes, caused him publicly to avow pretensions that impressed into the minds of the people, an incurable jealousy; this with an affectation of a profound skill in the art of dissembling, or kingcraft, as he termed it, rendered him the object of fear and distrust; when at the same time he was himself the only dupe to an impertinent, useless hypocrisy.

If the laws and constitution of England received no prejudice from his government, it was owing to his want of ability to effect a change suitable to the purpose of an arbitrary sway. Stained with these vices, and sullied with these weaknesses, if he is even exempt from our hatred, the exemption must arise from motives of contempt. Despicable as he appears through his own Britannic government, his behaviour when king of Scotland was in many points unexceptionable; but, intoxicated with the power he received over a people whose privileges were but feebly established, and

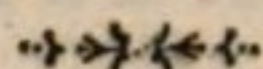


who had been long subjected to civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, he at once flung off that moderation that hid his deformities from the common eye. It is alledged, that the corruption he met with in the court of England, and the time-serving genius of the English noblemen, were the great means that debauched him from his circumspect conduct. Among the forwardest of the worthless tribe was Cecil, afterwards Earl of Salisbury, who told him on his coming to the crown, that he should find his English subjects like asses, on whom he might lay any burden, and should need neither bit nor bridle, but their asses ears. He died March 27. A. D. 1625, aged 59.

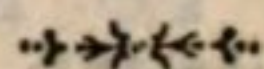
CHARACTER OF CHARLES I.

BY HUME.

The character of this prince, as that of most men, if not of all men, was mixed, but his virtues predominated extremely above his vices, or, more properly speaking, his imperfections: for scarce any of his faults arose to that pitch, as to merit the appellation of vices. To consider him in the most favourable light, it may be affirmed, that his dignity was exempt from pride, his humanity from weakness, his bravery from rashness, his temperance from austerity, and his frugality from avarice: all these virtues in him maintained their proper bounds, and merited unreserved praise. To



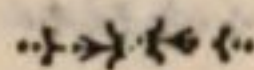
speak the most harshly of him, we may affirm, that many of his good qualities were attended with some latent frailty, which, though seemingly considerable, was able, when seconded by the extreme malevolence of his fortune, to disappoint them of all their influence. His beneficent disposition was clouded by a manner not gracious, his virtue was tinctured with superstition, his good sense was disfigured by a deference to persons of a capacity much inferior to his own, and his moderate temper exempted him not from hasty and precipitate resolutions. He deserves the epithet of a good, rather than a great man; and was more fitted to rule in a regular established government, than either to give way to the encroachments of a popular assembly, or finally to subdue their pretensions. He wanted suppleness and dexterity sufficient for the first measure; he was not endowed with vigour requisite for the second. Had he been born an absolute prince, his humanity and good sense had rendered his reign happy, and his memory precious. Had the limitations on the prerogative been in his time quite fixed and certain, his integrity had made him regard as sacred the boundaries of the constitution. Unhappily his fate threw him into a period, when the precedents of many former reigns savoured strongly of arbitrary power, and the genius of the people ran violently towards liberty. And if his political prudence was not sufficient to extricate him from such a perilous situation, he may be excused, since, even after the event, when it is com-



monly easy to correct all errors, one is at a loss to determine what conduct, in his circumstances, would have maintained the authority of the crown, and preserved the peace of the nation. Exposed without revenue, without arms, to the assault of furious, implacable, and bigoted factions; it was never permitted him, but with the most fatal consequences, to commit the smallest mistake; a condition too rigorous to be imposed on the greatest human capacity.

Some historians have rashly questioned the good faith of this prince; but for this reproach, the most malignant scrutiny of his conduct, which in every circumstance is now thoroughly known, affords not any reasonable foundation. On the contrary, if we consider the extreme difficulties to which he was so frequently reduced, and compare the sincerity of his professions and declarations, we shall avow, that probity and honour ought justly to be numbered among his most shining qualities. In every treaty, those concessions, which he thought in conscience he could not maintain, he never would by any motive or persuasion be induced to make.

And though some violations of the petition of right may be imputed to him; those are more to be ascribed to the necessity of his situation, and to the lofty ideas of royal prerogative which he had imbibed, than to any failure of the integrity of his principles. This prince was of a comely presence; of a sweet and melancholy aspect; his

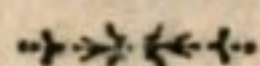


face was regular, handsome and well complexioned; his body strong, healthy, and justly proportioned; and being of middle stature, he was capable of enduring the greatest fatigues. He excelled in horsemanship and other exercises; and he possessed all the exterior, as well as many of the essential qualities, which form an accomplished prince.

CHARACTER OF CHARLES I.

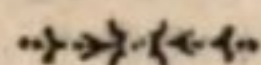
BY SMOLLETT.

Such was the unworthy and unexampled fate of Charles I. king of England, who fell a sacrifice to the most atrocious insolence of treason, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and in the twenty-fourth of his reign. He was a prince of a middling stature, robust, and well proportioned. His hair was of a dark colour, his forehead high, his complexion pale, his visage long, and his aspect melancholy. He excelled in riding, and other manly exercises; he inherited a good understanding from nature, and had cultivated it with great assiduity. His perception was clear and acute, his judgment solid and decisive; he possessed a refined taste for the liberal arts, and was a munificent patron to those who excelled in painting, sculpture, music, and architecture. In his private morals, he was altogether unblemished and exemplary. He was merciful, modest, chaste, temperate, religious, personally



brave, and we may join the noble historian in saying, « He was the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best christian of the age in which he lived. » He had the misfortune to be bred up in high notions of the prerogative, which he thought his honour and duty obliged him to maintain. He lived at a time when the spirit of the people became too mighty for those restraints which the regal power derived from the constitution; and when the tide of fanaticism began to overbear the religion of his country, to which he was conscientiously devoted; he suffered himself to be guided by counsellors, who were not only inferior to himself in knowledge and judgment, but generally proud, partial, and inflexible, and from an excess of conjugal affection that bordered upon weakness, he paid too much deference to the advice and desires of his consort, who was superstitiously attached to the errors of popery, and importuned him incessantly in favour of the roman catholics.

Such were the sources of all that misgovernment which was imputed to him, during the first fifteen years of his reign. From the beginning of the civil war to his fatal catastrophe, his conduct seems to have been unexceptionable. His infirmities and imperfections have been candidly owned in the course of this narration. He was not very liberal to his dependants; his conversation was not easy, nor his address pleasing; yet the probity of his



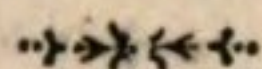
heart, and the innocence of his manners, won the affection of all who attended his person, not even excepting those who had the charge of his confinement. In a word, he certainly deserved the epithet of a virtuous prince, though he wanted some of those shining qualities, which constitute the character of a great monarch. He was beheaded, January 30, 1648-9.

CHARACTER OF CHARLES I.

BY MACAULAY.

In the character of Charles, as represented by his panegyrists, we find the qualities of temperance, chastity, regularity, piety, equity, humanity, dignity, condescension, and equanimity; some have gone so far as to allow him integrity, and many writers, who condemn his political principles, give him the title of a moral man. In the comparison of this representation with Charles's conduct, accurately and justly described, it is discernible that vices of the worst tendency, when shaded by a plausible and formal carriage, when concordant to the interests of a faction, and the prejudices of the vulgar, assume the appearances of, and are imposed on the credulous world as, virtues of the first rank.

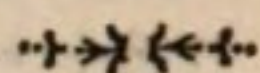
Passion for power was Charles's predominant vice; idolatry to his regal prerogatives, his governing principle. The interests of the crown,



legitimated every measure, and sanctified in his eye the widest deviation from moral rule.

Neither gratitude, clemency, humanity, equity, nor generosity, have place in the fair part of Charles's character; of the virtues of temperance, fortitude, and personal bravery, he was undeniably possessed. His manners partook of dissipation, and his conversation of the indecency of a court. His chastity has been called in question, by an author of the highest repute; and were it allowed, it was tainted by an excess of uxoriousness, which gave it the properties and the consequences of vice. The want of integrity is manifest in every part of his conduct; which, whether the corruption of his judgment, or heart, lost him fair opportunities of reinstatement in the throne, and was the vice for which above all others he paid the tribute of his life. His intellectual powers were naturally good, and so improved by a continual exercise, that though in the beginning of his reign he spoke with difficulty and hesitation, towards the close of his life he discovered in his writings purity of language and dignity of style; in his debates elocution, and quickness of perception. The high opinion he entertained of regal dignity, occasioned him to observe a stateliness and imperiousness in his manner; which, to the rational and intelligent, was unamiable and offensive; by the weak and formal, it was mistaken for dignity.

In the exercise of horsemanship he excelled; had a good taste and even skill, in several of the



polite arts; but though a proficient in some branches of literature, was no encourager of useful learning, and only patronized adepts in jargon of the divine right and utility of kings and bishops. His understanding in this point was so depraved by the prejudices of his education, the flattery of priests, and the affections of his heart, that he would never endure conversation which tended to inculcate the principles of equal right in men; and notwithstanding that the particularity of his situation enforced his attention to doctrines of this kind, he went out of the world with the same fond prejudices with which he had been fostered in his nursery, and cajoled in the zenith of his power.

Charles was of a middle stature; his body strong, healthy, and justly proportioned; and his aspect melancholy, yet not unpleasing. His surviving issue were three sons and three daughters. He was executed in the 49th year of his age, and buried, by the appointment of the parliament, at Windsor, decently, yet without pomp.

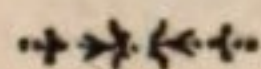
CHARACTER OF CHARLES I.

BY CLARENDON.

To speak first of his private qualifications as a man, before the mention of his princely and royal virtues; he was, if ever any, the most worthy of the title of an honest man; so great a lover of justice, that no temptation could dispose him to a



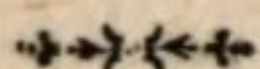
wrongful action, except it was so disguised to him that he believed it to be just. He had a tenderness and compassion of nature, which restrained him from ever doing a hard hearted thing : and therefore he was so apt to grant pardon to malefactors, that the judges of the land represented to him the damage and insecurity to the public, that flowed from such indulgence. And then he restrained himself from pardoning either murders, or highway robberies, and quickly discerned the fruits of his severity by a wonderful reformation of those enormities. He was very punctual and regular in his devotions ; he was never known to enter upon his recreations or sports, though ever so early in the morning, before he had been at public prayers ; so that on hunting days his chaplains were bound to a very early attendance. He was likewise very strict in observing the hours of his private devotion ; and was so severe an exactor of gravity and reverence in all mention of religion, that he could never endure any light or profane word, with what sharpness of wit soever it was covered : and though he was well pleased, and delighted with reading verses made upon any occasion, no man durst bring before him any thing that was profane or unclean. That kind of wit had never any countenance then. He was so great an example of conjugal affection, that they who did not imitate him in that particular, durst not brag of their liberty : and he did not only permit, but direct his bishops, to prosecute those scandalous vices, in



the ecclesiastical courts , against persons of eminence , and near relation to his service.

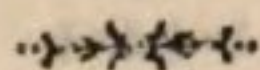
His kingly virtues had some mixture and alloy, that hindered them from shining in full lustre , and from producing those fruits they should have been attended with. He was not in his nature very bountiful, though he gave very much. This appeared more after the Duke of Buckingham's death , after which those showers fell very rarely ; and he paused too long in giving , which made those to whom he gave , less sensible of the benefit. He kept state to the full , which made his court very orderly ; no man presuming to be seen in a place where he had no pretence to be. He saw, and observed men long, before he received them about his person ; and did not love strangers, nor very confident men. He was a patient hearer of causes ; which he frequently accustomed himself to , at the council board ; and judged very well , and was dexterous in the mediating part : so that he often put an end to causes by persuasion, which the stubbornness of men's humours made dilatory in courts of justice.

He was very fearless in his person ; but , in his riper years , not very enterprizing. He had an excellent understanding , but was not confident enough of it ; which made him oftentimes change his own opinion for a worse, and follow the advice of men that did not judge so well as himself. This made him more irresolute than the conjuncture of his affairs would admit : if he had been of a rougher



and more imperious nature, he would have found more respect and duty. And his not applying some severe cures to approaching evils, proceeded from the lenity of his nature, and the tenderness of his conscience, which, in all cases of blood made him choose the softer way, and not hearken to severe counsels, how reasonably soever urged. This only, restrained him from pursuing his advantage in the first Scottish expedition, when, humanly speaking, he might have reduced that nation to the most entire obedience that could have been wished. After all this, a man might reasonably believe that nothing less than an universal defection of three nations could have reduced a great king to so hard a fate; it is most certain, that, in that very hour when he was wickedly murdered in the sight of the sun, he had as great a share in the hearts and affections of his subjects in general, was as much beloved, esteemed, and longed for by the people in general of the three nations as any of his predecessors had ever been.

To conclude, he was the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best Christian, that the age in which he lived produced. And if he were not the greatest king, if he were without some parts and qualities which have made some kings great and happy, no other prince was ever unhappy who was possessed of half his virtues and endowments, and so much without any kind of vice. He was beheaded in the year 1648.



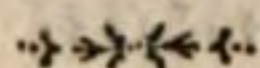
CHARACTER OF OLIVER CROMWELL. *

BY NOBLE.

Oliver Cromwell was of a robust make and constitution, his aspect manly though clownish. His education extended no farther than a superficial knowledge of the latin tongue, but he inherited great talents from nature; though they were such as he could not have exerted to advantage at any other juncture than that of a civil war, inflamed by religious contests. His character was formed from an amazing conjuncture of enthusiasm, hypocrisy, and ambition. He was possessed of courage and resolution, that overlooked all dangers, and saw no difficulties. He dived into the characters of mankind with wonderful sagacity, whilst he concealed his own purposes, under the impenetrable shield of dissimulation.

He reconciled the most atrocious crimes to the most rigid notions of religious obligations. From the severest exercise of devotion, he relaxed into the most ridiculous and idle buffoonery: yet he preserved the dignity and distance of his character, in the midst of the coarsest familiarity. He was cruel and tyrannic from policy; just and temperate from inclination; perplexed and despicable in his

* From Noble's Memoirs of the Protectoral house of Cromwell.



discourse ; clear and consummate in his designs ; ridiculous in his reveries ; respectable in his conduct ; in a word , the strangest compound of villainy and virtue , baseness and magnanimity , absurdity and good sense , that we find on record in the annals of mankind. *

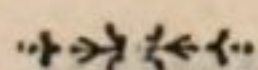
CHARACTER OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

BY CLARENDON.

He was one of those men, *quos vituperare ne inimici quidem possunt, nisi ut simul laudent* ; whom his very enemies could not condemn without commending him at the same time : for he could never have done half that mischief without great parts of courage , industry , and judgment. He must have had a wonderful understanding in the natures and humours of men , and as great a dexterity in applying them ; who , from a private and obscure birth , (though of a good family) without interest or

* Cromwell died more than five millions in debt ; though the parliament had left him in the treasury above five hundred thousand pounds , and in stores to the value of seven hundred thousand pounds.

Richard , the son of Cromwell , was proclaimed protector in his room ; but Richard , being of a very different disposition to his father , resigned his authority the 22d of April 1659 ; and soon after signed his abdication in form , and retired to live several years after his resignation , at first on the Continent , and afterwards upon his paternal fortune at home.

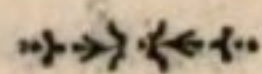


estate, alliance or friendship, could raise himself to such a height, and compound and knead such opposite and contradictory tempers, humours, and interests into a consistence, that contributed to his designs, and to their own destruction; whilst himself grew insensibly powerful enough to cut off those by whom he had climbed, in the instant that they projected to demolish their own building. What was said of Cinna may very justly be said of him, *ausum eum, quæ nemo auderet bonus; perfecisse, quæ à nullo, nisi fortissimo, perfici possent.** He attempted those things which no good man durst have ventured on, and atchieved those in which none but a valiant and great man could have succeeded. Without doubt, no man with more wickedness ever attempted any thing, or brought to pass what he desired more wickedly, more in the face and contempt of religion, and moral honesty; yet wickedness as great as his could never have accomplished those designs, without the assistance of a great spirit, an admirable circumspection, and sagacity, and a most magnanimous resolution.

When he appeared first in parliament, he seemed to have a person in no degree gracious, ** no

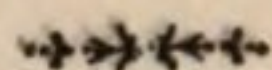
* Vell. Paterc, l. 2. c. 24.

** Sir Philip Warwick, who yields to none of his contemporary historians in candour and integrity, gives a minute description of the deportment of Cromwell at this time. See *Warwick's memoirs of the reign of Charles I.* 8vo. p. 247.



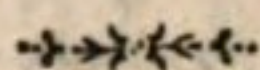
ornament of discourse, none of those talents which used to conciliate the affections of the stander by: yet as he grew into place and authority, his parts seemed to be raised, as if he had had concealed faculties, till he had occasion to use them: and when he was to act the part of a great man, he did it without any indecency, notwithstanding the want of custom.

After he was confirmed and invested protector, he consulted with very few upon any action of importance, nor communicated any enterprise he resolved upon, with more than those who were to have principal parts in the execution of it; nor with them sooner than was absolutely necessary. What he once resolved, in which he was not rash, he would not be dissuaded from, nor endure any contradiction of his power and authority; but extorted obedience from them who were not willing to yield it. He committed Serjeant Maynard to the Tower for presuming (in Westminster-hall) to question or make doubt of his authority; and the judges were sent for, and severely reprehended for suffering that licence. Thus he subdued a spirit that had often been troublesome to the most sovereign power, and made Westminster-hall as obedient to his commands as any of the rest of his quarters. In all other matters which did not concern the life of his jurisdiction, he seemed to have great reverence for the law, rarely interposing between party and party. As he proceeded with this kind of indignation with those who were re-



fractory, and durst contend with his greatness, so towards all who complied with his good pleasure, and courted his protection, he used great civility, generosity, and bounty. To reduce three nations which perfectly hated him, to an entire obedience to all his dictates; to awe and govern those nations by an army that was ind devoted to him, and wished his ruin, was an instance of a very prodigious address. But his greatness at home was but a shadow of the glory he had abroad. It was hard to discover, which feared him most, France, Spain, or the Low Countries, where his friendship was current at the value he put upon it. As they did all sacrifice their honour, and their interest, to his pleasure, so there is nothing he could have demanded, that either of them would have denied him.

To conclude his character, Cromwell was not so far a man of blood as to follow Machiavel's method, which prescribes, upon a total alteration of government, as a thing absolutely necessary to cut off all the heads of those, and extirpate their families, who are friends to the old one. It was confidently reported, that, in the council of officers, it was more than once proposed, « that there might » be a general massacre of all the royal party, as » the only expedient to secure the government, » but that Cromwell would never consent to, it may be, out of too great a contempt of his enemies. In a word, as he was guilty of many crimes against which damnation is denounced, and for which



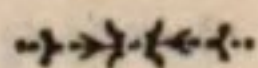
hell-fire is prepared, so he had some good qualities, which have caused the memory of some men in all ages to be celebrated; and he will be looked upon by posterity as a brave wicked man. He died in the year 1658.

CHARACTER OF CHARLES II.

BY HUME.

If we survey the character of Charles the Second in the different lights which it will admit of, it will appear very various, and give rise to different and even opposite sentiments. When considered as a companion, he appears the most amiable and engaging of men; and indeed, in this view, his deportment must be allowed altogether unexceptionable. His love of raillery was so tempered with good-breeding, that it was never offensive. His propensity to satire was so checked with discretion, that his friends never dreaded their becoming the object of it. His wit, to use the expression of one who knew him well, and who was himself an exquisite judge*, could not be said so much to be very refined or elevated, qualities apt to beget jealousy and apprehension in company, as to be a plain, gaining, well-bred, recommending kind of wit. And though perhaps he talked more than strict rules of behaviour might permit, men

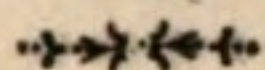
* Marquis of Halifax.



were so pleased with the affable communicative deportment of the monarch, that they always went away contented both with him and with themselves. This indeed is the most shining part of the king's character, and he seems to have been sensible of it; for he was fond of dropping the formalities of state, and of relapsing every moment into the companion.

In the duties of private life, his conduct, though not free from exception, was in the main laudable. He was an easy generous lover, a civil obliging husband, a friendly brother, an indulgent father, and a good-natured master. The voluntary friendships, however, which this prince contracted, nay, even his sense of gratitude, were feeble; and he never attached himself to any of his ministers or courtiers with a very sincere affection. He believed them to have no other motive for serving him but self-interest, and he was still ready, in his turn, to sacrifice them to present ease and convenience.

With a detail on his private character we must set bounds to our panegyric on Charles. The other parts of his conduct may admit of some apology, but can deserve small applause. He was indeed so much fitted for private life, preferably to public, that he even possessed order, frugality, economy in the former; was profuse, thoughtless, negligent in the latter. When we consider him as a sovereign, his character, though not altogether void of virtues, was in the main dangerous to his



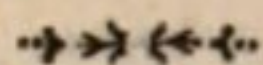
people, and dishonourable to himself. Negligent of the interest of the nation, careless of its glory, averse to its religion, jealous of its liberty, lavish of its treasure, and sparing only of its blood; he exposed it by his measures (though he appeared ever but in sport) to the danger of a furious civil war, and even to the ruin and ignominy of a foreign contest. Yet may all these enormities, if fairly and candidly examined, be imputed, in a great measure, to the indolence of his temper: a fault, which, however unfortunate in a monarch, it is impossible for us to regard with great severity.

It has been remarked of this king, that he never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one: a censure, which, though too far carried, seems to have some foundation in his character and deportment. He died Feb. 6, 1685, aged 54.

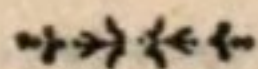
CHARACTER OF CHARLES II.

BY SMOLLETT.

Charles II. was in his person tall and swarthy, and his countenance marked with strong harsh lineaments. His penetration was keen, his judgment clear, his understanding extensive, his conversation lively and entertaining, and he possessed the talent of wit and ridicule. He was easy of access, polite, and affable; had he been limited to a private station, he would have passed for the most agreeable and best-natured man of the age in



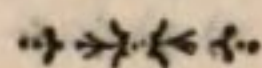
which he lived. His greatest enemies allow him to have been a civil husband, an obliging lover, an affectionate father, and an indulgent master; even as a prince, he manifested an aversion to cruelty and injustice. Yet these good qualities were more than over-balanced by his weakness and defects. He was a scoffer at religion, and a libertine in his morals; careless, indolent, profuse, abandoned to effeminate pleasure, incapable of any noble enterprize, a stranger to any manly friendship and gratitude, deaf to the voice of honour, blind to the allurements of glory, and in a word, wholly destitute of every active virtue. Being himself unprincipled, he believed mankind were false, perfidious, and interested; and therefore practised dissimulation for his own convenience. He was strongly attached to the French manners, government, and monarch; he was dissatisfied with his own limited prerogative. The majority of his own subjects he despised or hated, as hypocrites, fanatics, and republicans, who had persecuted his father and himself, and sought the destruction of the monarchy. In these sentiments, he could not be supposed to pursue the interest of the nation; on the contrary, he seemed to think that his own safety was incompatible with the honour and advantage of his people.



CHARACTER OF CHARLES II.

BY BURNET.

Thus lived and died King Charles the Second. He was the greatest instance in history of the various revolutions of which any one man seemed capable. He was brought up the first twelve years of his life, with the splendour that became the heir of so great a crown. After that, he passed through eighteen years in great inequalities, unhappy in the war, in the loss of his father, and of the crown of England.—While he was abroad at Paris, Cologne, or Brussels, he never seemed to lay any thing to heart. He pursued all his diversions, and irregular pleasures in a free career; and seemed to be as serene under the loss of a crown, as the greatest philosopher could have been. Nor did he willingly hearken to any of those projects, with which, he complained often, his chancellor persecuted him. That in which he seemed most concerned was, to find money to support his expence. And it was often said, that if Cromwell would have compounded the matter, and have given him a good round pension, he might have been induced to resign his title to him. During his exile, he delivered himself so entirely to his pleasures, that he became incapable of application. He spent little of his time in reading and study, and yet less in thinking. And in the state his affairs were then in, he accustomed

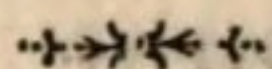


himself to say to every person, and upon all occasions, that which he thought would please most: so that words or promises went very easily from him. And he had so ill an opinion of mankind, that he thought the great art of living and governing was, to manage all things, and all persons, with a depth of craft and dissimulation. He desired to become absolute, and to overturn both our religion and laws; yet he would neither run the risk, nor give himself the trouble, which so great a design required. He had an appearance of gentleness in his outward deportment; but he seemed to have no bowels nor tenderness in his nature; and in the end of his life he became cruel.

CHARACTER OF CHARLES II.

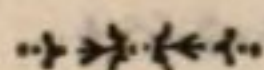
BY MACPHERSON.

The character of Charles the Second, like the transactions of his reign, has assumed various appearances, in proportion to the passions and prejudices of different writers. To affirm that he was a great and good king, would be as unjust as to allege that he was destitute of all virtue, and a bloody and inhuman tyrant. The indolence of his disposition, and the dissipation occasioned by his pleasures, as they were at first the source of his misfortunes, became afterwards the safety of the nation. Had he joined the ambition of power, and the perseverance and attention of his brother,



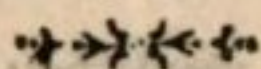
to his own insinuating and engaging address, he might have secured his reputation with writers, by enslaving them with the nation.

In his person he was tall and well made. His complexion was dark, the lines of his face strong and harsh, when singly traced: but when his features were comprehended in one view, they appeared dignified and even pleasing. In the motions of his person he was easy, graceful, and firm. His constitution was strong, and communicated an active vigour to all his limbs. Though a lover of ease of mind, he was fond of bodily exercise. He rose early, he walked much, he mixed with the meanest of his subjects, and joined in their conversation, without diminishing his own dignity, or raising their presumption. He was acquainted with many persons in the lower stations of life. He captivated them with sprightly terms of humour, and with a kind of good-natured wit, which rendered them pleased with themselves. His guards only attended him on public occasions. He took the air frequently in company with a single friend; and though crowds followed him, it was more from a wish to attract his notice, than from an idle curiosity. When evident designs against his life were daily exhibited before the courts of justice, he changed not his manner of appearing in public. It was soon after the Rye-house plot was discovered, he is said to have been severe on his brother's character, when he exhibited a striking feature of his own. The duke returning from hunt-



ing with his guards, found the king one day in Hyde Park. He expressed his surprize how his majesty could venture his person alone at such a perilous time. « James, » (replied the king,) « take « you care of yourself, and I am safe. No man in « England will kill ME, to make YOU king.»

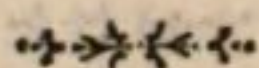
When he was opposed with most violence in parliament, he continued the most popular man in the kingdom. His good-breeding as a gentleman, overcame the opinion conceived of his faults as a king. His affability, his easy address, his attention to the very prejudices of his people, rendered him independent of all the arts of his enemies to inflame the vulgar. He is said with reason to have died opportunely for his country. Had his life extended to the number of years which the strength of his constitution seemed to promise, the nation would have lost all memory of their liberties. Had his fate placed Charles the Second in these latter times; when influence supplies the place of obvious power; when the crown has ceased to be distressed through the channel of its necessities; when the representatives of the people, in granting supplies for the public service, provide for themselves; his want of ambition would have precluded the jealousy, and his popular qualities secured the utmost admiration of his subjects. His gallantry itself would be construed into spirit, in an age where decency is only an improvement on vice.



CHARACTER OF JAMES II.

BY MACPHERSON.

In many respects it must be owned, that he was a virtuous man, as well as a good monarch. He was frugal of the public money; he encouraged commerce with great attention; he applied himself to naval affairs with success; he supported the fleet as the glory and protection of England. He was also zealous for the honour of his country; he was capable of supporting its interests with a degree of dignity in the scale of Europe. In his private life he was almost irreproachable; he was an indulgent parent, a tender husband, a generous and steady friend; in his deportment he was affable, though stately; he bestowed favours with peculiar grace; he prevented solicitation by the suddenness of his disposal of places; though scarce any prince was ever so generally deserted, few ever had so many private friends; those who injured him most were the first to implore his forgiveness, and even after they had raised another prince to the throne, they respected his person, and were anxious for his safety. To these virtues he added a steadiness of counsels, a perseverance in his plans, and courage in his enterprizes. He was honourable and fair in all his dealings; he was unjust to men in their principles, but never with regard to their property. Though few monarchs ever offended a people more,



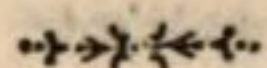
he yielded to none in his love of his subjects; he even affirmed, that he quitted England to prevent the horrors of a civil war, as much as from fear of a restraint upon his person from the prince of Orange. His great virtue was a strict adherence to facts and truth in all he wrote and said, though some parts of his conduct had rendered his sincerity in his political profession suspected by his enemies. He abdicated his throne 1689.

CHARACTER OF JAMES II.

BY MACAULAY.

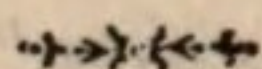
The enemies of James did not fail to make the most of the advantages they had gained by their subtle manœuvres; some said, that the king's flight was the effect of a disturbed conscience, labouring under the load of secret guilt; and those whose censures were more moderate, asserted, that his incurable bigotry had led him even to sacrifice his crown to the interests of his priests; and that he chose rather to depend on the precarious support of a French force to subdue the refractory spirit of his people, than to abide the issue of events which threatened such legal limitations as should effectually prevent any further abuse of power.

The whole tenor of the king's past conduct undoubtedly gave a countenance to insinuations which were in themselves sufficiently plausible to answer all the purposes for which they were indus-

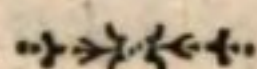


triously circulated; but when the following circumstances are taken into consideration, namely, that timidity is natural to the human mind, when oppressed with an uninterrupted series of misfortunes; that the king's life was put entirely into the hands of a rival, whose ambitious views were altogether incompatible even with the shadow of regal power in his person; that the means taken to increase the apprehensions which reflections of this nature must necessarily occasion, were of the most mortifying kind; it must be acknowledged, that if the principles of heroic virtue might have produced conduct in some exalted individuals, yet that the generality of mankind would, in James's situation, have sought shelter in the professed generosity of a trusted friend, from personal insult, personal danger, and from all the harrassing suspense under which the mind of this imprudent and unfortunate monarch had long laboured.

The opposition of James's religious principles to those of his subjects, his unpopular connections with the court of France; but, above all, the permanent establishment of a rival family on the throne of England, has formed in his favour such an union of prejudice and interest, as to destroy in the minds of posterity, all that sympathy which, on similar occasions, and in similar misfortunes, has so wonderfully operated in favour of other princes; and whilst we pay the tribute of unavailing tears over the memory of Charles the First; whilst, with the Church of England, we venerate him as a mar-



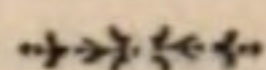
tyr to the power and office of prelates ; whilst we see, with regret, that he was stripped of his dignity and life at the very time when the chastening hand of affliction had, in a great measure, corrected the errors of a faulty education ; the irresistible power of truth must oblige us to confess, that the adherence to religious principles, which cost the father his life, deprived the son of his dominions ; that the enormous abuses of power with which both sovereigns are accused, owed their origin to the same source ; the errors arising from a bad education, aggravated and extended by the impious flattery of designing priests ; we shall also be obliged to confess, that the parliament itself, by an unprecedented servility, helped to confirm James in the exalted idea he had entertained of the royal office, and that the doctrines of an absolute and unconditional submission on the part of subjects, which, in the reign of his father, was, in a great measure, confined to the precepts of a Laud, a Sibthorpe, and Maynwaring, were now taught as the avowed doctrines of the Church of England, were acknowledged by the two Universities, and implicitly avowed by a large majority of the nation ; so great, indeed, was the change in the temper, manners, and opinions of the people, from the commencement of the reign of Charles the First, to the commencement of the reign of his son James, that at this shameful period the people gloried in having laid all their privileges at the foot of the throne, and execrated every generous principle of



freedom, as arising from a spirit totally incompatible with the peace of society, and altogether repugnant to the doctrines of Christianity.

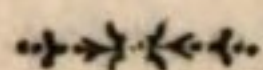
This was the situation of affairs at the accession of the unfortunate James; and had he been equally unprincipled as his brother, the deceased king; had he professed himself a Protestant, whilst he was in his heart a Papist; had he not regarded it as his duty to use his omnipotent power for the restoring to some parts of its ancient dignity a Church which he regarded as the only true Church of Christ; or had he, instead of attacking the prerogative of the prelacy, suffered them to share the regal despotism which they had fixed on the basis of conscience, the most flagrant abuses of civil power would never have been called in judgment against him, and parliament themselves would have lent their constitutional authority to have rivetted the chains of the empire in such a manner as should have put it out of the power of the most determined votaries of freedom to have re-established the government on its ancient foundation. From this immediate evil England owes its deliverance to the bigoted sincerity of James; a circumstance which ought, in some measure, to conciliate our affections to the memory of the sufferer, and induce us to treat those errors with lenity, which have led to the enjoyment of privileges that can never be entirely lost, but by a general corruption of principle and depravity of manners.

It was said by the witty duke of Buckingham,



« that Charles the Second might do well if he
« would, and that James would do well if he
« could ; » an observation which says little for the
understanding of James , but a great deal for his
heart ; and , with all the blemishes with which his
public character is stained , he was not deficient in
several qualities necessary to compose a good
sovereign. His industry and business were exem-
plary ; he was frugal of the public money, he che-
rished and extended the maritime power of the
empire , and his encouragement of trade was at-
tended with such success, that , according to the
observations of the impartial historian Ralph , as
the frugality of his administration helped to in-
crease the number of malcontents , so his extreme
attention to trade was not less alarming to the
whole body of the Dutch , than his resolution not
to rush into a war with France was mortifying to
their Stadtholder.

In domestic life , the character of James , though
not irreproachable , was comparatively good. It is
true , he was in a great measure tainted with that
licentiousness of manners , which at this time per-
vaded the whole society , and which reigned
triumphant within the circle of the court ; but he
was never carried into any excesses which trenched
deeply on the duties of social life ; and if the qua-
lities of his heart were only to be judged by his
different conduct in the different characters of
husband , father , master , and friend , he might be
pronounced a man of very amiable disposition.



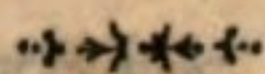
But those who know not how to forgive injuries, and can never pardon the errors, the infirmities, the vices, or even the virtues of their fellow-creatures, when in any respect they affect personal interest or inclination, will aim against them the sensibility of every humane mind, and can never expect from others that justice and commiseration which themselves have never exercised; but whilst we execrate that rancorous cruelty with which James, in the short hour of triumph, persecuted all those who endeavoured to thwart his ambitious hopes; it is but justice to observe, that the rank vices of pride, malice, and revenge, which blacken his conduct, whilst he figured in the station of presumptive heir to the crown, and afterwards in the character of sovereign, on the successful quelling of the Monmouth rebellion, were thoroughly corrected by the chastising hand of affliction: that the whole period of his life, from his return to Ireland to the day of his death, was spent in the exercise of the first Christian virtues, patience, fortitude, humility, and resignation. Bretonneau, his biographer, records, that he always spoke with an extreme moderation of the individuals who had acted the most successfully in his disfavour; that he reproved those who mentioned their conduct with severity; that he read, even with a stoical apathy, the bitterest writings which were published against him; that he regarded the loss of empire as a necessary correction of the misdemeanors of his life, and even rebuked those who expressed any con-



cern for the issue of events, which he respected as ordinations of the divine will.

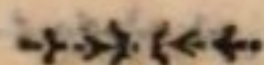
According to the same biographer, James was exact in his devotion, moderate even to abstinence in his life; full of sentiments of the highest contrition for past offences; and, according to the discipline of the Romish church, was very severe in the austerities which he inflicted on his person. As this prince justly regarded himself as a martyr to the Catholic faith, as his warmest friends were all of this persuasion, as his conversation in his retirement at St. Germain's was in a great measure confined to priests and devotees, it is natural that this superstition should increase with the increase of religious sentiment; and as he had made use of his power and authority, whilst in England, to enlarge the number of proselytes to popery; so, in a private station, he laboured incessantly, by prayer, exhortation, and example, to confirm the piety of his popish adherents, and to effect a reformation in those who still continued firm to the doctrines of the Church of England. He visited once a year the monks of La Trappe, the severest order of religionists in France; and his conformity to the discipline of the convent was so strict and exact, that he impressed those devotees with sentiments of admiration at his piety, humility, and constancy.

Thus having spent twelve years with a higher degree of peace and tranquillity than he had ever experienced in the most triumphant part of his life,



he was seized with a palsy in September 1701, and after having languished fifteen days, died in the sixty-eighth year of his age, having filled up the interval between his first seizure and final exit with the whole train of religious exercises enjoined on similar occasions by the church of Rome, with solemn and repeated professions of his faith, and earnest exhortations to his two children, the youngest of whom was born in the second year of his exile, to keep steadfast to the religion in which they had been educated. These precepts and commands have acted with a force superior to all the temptations of a crown, and have been adhered to with a firmness which obliges an historian to acknowledge the superiority which James's descendants, in the nice points of honour and conscience, have gained over the character of Henry the Fourth, who, at the period when he was looked up to as the great hero of the Protestant cause, made no scruple to accept the crown on the disgraceful terms of abjuring the principles of the Reformation, and embracing the principles of a religion, which, from his early infancy, he had been taught to regard as idolatrous and profane.

The dominion of error over the minds of the generality of mankind is irresistible. James, to the last hour of his life, continued as great a bigot to his political as his religious errors: he could not help considering the strength and power of the crown as a circumstance necessary to the preservation and happiness of the people; and in a letter of

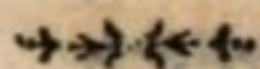


advice which he wrote to his son, whilst he conjures him to pay a religious observance to all the duties of a good sovereign, he cautions him against suffering any entrenchment on the royal prerogative. Among several heads, containing excellent instructions on the art of reigning happily and justly, he warns the young prince never to disquiet his subjects in their property or their religion; and, what is remarkable, to his last breath he persisted in asserting, that he never attempted to subvert the laws, or procure more than a toleration and equality of privilege to his Catholic subjects. As there is great reason to believe this assertion to be true, it shews, that the delusion was incurable under which the king laboured, by the trust he had put in the knavish doctrines of lawyers and priests; and that neither himself, nor his Protestant abettors, could fathom the consequences of that enlarged toleration which he endeavoured to establish.

CHARACTER OF WILLIAM III.

BY SMOLLETT.

William III. was in his person of the middle stature, a thin body, and delicate constitution, subject to an asthma and continual cough from his infancy. He had an aquiline nose, sparkling eyes, a large forehead, and grave solemn aspect. He was very sparing of speech; his conversation was



dry, and his manner disgusting, except in battle, when his deportment was free, spirited, and animating. In courage, fortitude, and equanimity, he rivalled the most eminent warriors of antiquity; and his natural sagacity made amends for the defects of his education, which had not been properly superintended. He was religious, temperate, generally just and sincere, a stranger to violent transports of passion, and might have passed for one of the best princes of the age in which he lived, had he never ascended the throne of Great Britain. But the distinguishing criterion of his character was ambition; to this he sacrificed the punctilios of honour and decorum, in deposing his own father-in-law and uncle; and this he gratified at the expence of the nation that raised him to sovereign authority. He aspired to the honour of acting as umpire in all the contests of Europe; and the second object of his attention was, the prosperity of that country to which he owed his birth and extraction. Whether he really thought the interests of the Continent and Great Britain were inseparable, or sought only to drag England into the confederacy as a convenient ally; certain it is, he involved these kingdoms in foreign connections, which, in all probability, will be productive of their ruin. In order to establish this favourite point, he scrupled not to employ all the engines of corruption, by which means the morals of the nation were totally debauched. He procured a parliamentary sanction for a standing army, which



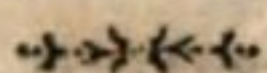
now seems to be interwoven in the constitution. He introduced the pernicious practice of borrowing upon remote funds ; an expedient that necessarily hatched a brood of usurers , brokers , and stock-jobbers , to prey upon the vitals of their country. He entailed upon the nation a growing debt , and a system of politics big with misery , despair , and destruction. To sum up his character in a few words , William was a fatalist in religion , indefatigable in war , enterprising in politics , dead to all the warm and generous emotions of the human heart , a cold relation , an indifferent husband , a disagreeable man , an ungracious prince , and an imperious sovereign.

He died March 8th, 1701, aged 52, having reigned 13 years.

CHARACTER OF WILLIAM III.

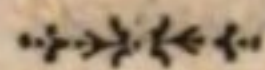
BY MACPHERSON.

William the Third , king of Great Britain and Ireland , was in his person of middle size , ill-shaped in his limbs , somewhat round in his shoulders , light brown in the colour of his hair , and in his complexion. The lines of his face were hard , and his nose was aquiline ; but a good and penetrating eye threw a kind of light on his countenance , which tempered its severity , and rendered his harsh features , in some measure , agreeable. Though his constitution was weak , delicate , and



infirm, he loved the manly exercises of the field; and often indulged himself in the pleasures, and even sometimes in the excesses, of the table. In his private character he was frequently harsh, passionate, and severe, with regard to trifles; but when the subject rose equal to his mind, and in the tumult of battle, he was dignified, cool, and serene. Though he was apt to form bad impressions, which were not easily removed, he was neither vindictive in his disposition, nor obstinate in his resentment. Neglected in his education, and, perhaps, destitute by nature of an elegance of mind, he had no taste for literature, none for the sciences, none for the beautiful arts. He paid no attention to music, he understood no poetry; he disregarded learning; he encouraged no men of letters, no painters, no artists of any kind. In fortification and the mathematics he had a considerable degree of knowledge. Though unsuccessful in the field, he understood military operations by land; but he neither possessed nor pretended to any skill in maritime affairs.

In the distribution of favours he was cold and injudicious. In the punishment of crimes, often too easy, and sometimes too severe. He was parsimonious where he should have been liberal; where he ought to be sparing, frequently profuse. In his temper he was silent and reserved, in his address ungraceful; and though not destitute of dissimulation, and qualified for intrigue, less apt to conceal his passions than his designs: these defects



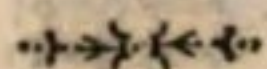
rather than vices of the mind, combining with an indifference about humouring mankind through their ruling passions, rendered him extremely unfit for gaining the affections of the English nation. His reign, therefore, was crowded with mortifications of various kinds; the discontented parties among his subjects found no difficulty in estranging the minds of the people from a prince possessed of few talents to make him popular. He was trusted, perhaps, less than he deserved, by the most obsequious of his parliaments; but it seems, upon the whole, apparent, that the nation adhered to his government more from a fear of the return of his predecessor, than from any attachment to his own person, or respect for his right to the throne.

CHARACTER OF QUEEN MARY,

CONSORT OF WILLIAM III.

BY SMOLLETT.

Mary was in her person tall and well proportioned, with an oval visage, lively eyes, agreeable features, a mild aspect, and an air of dignity. Her apprehension was clear, her memory tenacious, and her judgment solid. She was a zealous Protestant, scrupulously exact in all the duties of devotion, of an even temper, of a calm and mild conversation; she was ruffled by no passion, and seems to have been a stranger to the emotions of



natural affection, for she ascended the throne from which her father had been deposed, and treated her sister as an alien to her blood. In a word, Mary seems to have imbibed the cold disposition and apathy of her husband, and to have centered all her ambition in deserving the epithet of an humble and obedient wife.

She died 28th December, 1694, aged 33.

CHARACTER OF ANNE.

BY SMOLLETT.

Anne Stuart, queen of Great Britain, was in her person of the middle size, well-proportioned; her hair was of a dark brown colour, her complexion ruddy, her features were regular, her countenance was rather round than oval, and her aspect more comely than majestic: her voice was clear and melodious, and her presence engaging; her capacity was naturally good, but not much cultivated by learning; nor did she exhibit any marks of extraordinary genius, or personal ambition: she was certainly deficient in that vigour of mind by which a princess ought to preserve her independence, and avoid the snares and fetters of sycophants and favourites; but whatever her weakness in this particular might have been, the virtues of her heart were never called in question; she was a pattern of conjugal affection and fidelity, a tender mother, a warm friend, and indulgent mis-



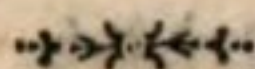
tress, a munificent patron, a mild and merciful princess; during whose reign no blood was shed for treason. She was zealously attached to the Church of England, from conviction rather than from prepossession; unaffectedly pious, just, charitable, and compassionate. She felt a mother's fondness for her people, by whom she was universally beloved with a warmth of affection which even the prejudice of party could not abate. In a word, if she were not the greatest, she was certainly one of the best and most unblemished sovereigns that ever sat upon the throne of England, and well deserved the expressive, though simple epithet of, the « good queen Anne.» She continued to dose in a lethargic insensibility, with very short intervals, till the first day of August in the morning, when she expired, in the fiftieth year of her age, and in the thirteenth of her reign.

She died in 1714.

CHARACTER OF ANNE.

BY CHAMBERLAINE.

Thus died Anne Stuart, queen of Great Britain, and one of the best and greatest monarchs that ever filled that throne. What was most remarkable, was a clear harmonious voice, always admired in her graceful delivery of her speeches to parliament, insomuch that it used to be a common saying in the mouth of every one, « that her

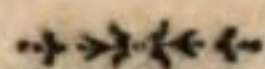


« very speech was music. » Good-nature, the true characteristic of the Stuarts, predominated in her temper, which was a compound of benevolence, generosity, indolence, and timidity, but not without a due sensibility of any slight which she thought was offered to her person or her dignity; to these all her actions, both as a monarch and as a woman, may be ascribed; these were the sources both of her virtues and her failings; her greatest blessing upon earth was that entire union of affections and inclinations between her and her royal consort; which made them a perfect pattern of conjugal love. She was a fond and tender mother, an easy and indulgent mistress, and a most gracious sovereign; but she had more than once reason to repent her giving up her heart, and trusting her secrets without reserve to her favourites. She retained to the last the principle of that true religion which she had imbibed early; being devout without affectation, and charitable without ostentation. She had a great reverence for clergymen eminent for learning and good lives, and was particularly beneficent to the poorer sort of them, of which she left an evidence which bears her name, and will perpetuate both that and her bounty to all succeeding generations.

CHARACTER OF ANNE.

BY MACPHERSON.

Thus died Anne Stuart, queen of Great Britain and Ireland, in the fiftieth year of her age, and thirteenth of her reign. In her person she was of a middle stature, and, before she bore children, well made. Her hair was dark, her complexion sanguine, her features strong, but not irregular, her whole countenance more dignified than agreeable. In the accomplishments of the mind, as a woman, she was not deficient: she understood music; she loved painting; she had even some taste for works of genius; she was always generous, sometimes liberal, but never profuse. Like the rest of the family, she was good-natured to a degree of weakness; indolent in her disposition, timid by nature, devoted to the company of her favourites, easily led. She possessed all the virtues of her father, except political courage; she was subject to all his weaknesses, except enthusiasm in religion; she was jealous of her authority, and sullenly irreconcilable towards those who treated either herself or prerogative with disrespect; but, like him also, she was much better qualified to discharge the duties of a private life than to act the part of a sovereign. As a friend, a mother, a wife, she deserved every praise. Her conduct as a daughter could scarcely be exceeded by a virtue much su-

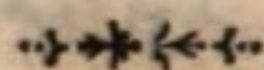


perior to all these. Upon the whole, though her reign was crowded with great events, she cannot, with any justice, be called a great princess. Subject to terror, beyond the constitutional timidity of her sex, she was altogether incapable of decisive counsels, and nothing but her irresistible popularity could have supported her authority amidst the ferment of those distracted times.

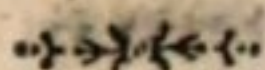
CHARACTER OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

BY ROBERTSON.

To all the charms of beauty, and the utmost elegance of external form, Mary added those accomplishments which render their impression irresistible. Polite, affable, insinuating, sprightly, and capable of speaking and writing with equal ease and dignity. Sudden, however, and violent in all her attachments; because her heart was warm and unsuspicious. Impatient of contradiction, because she had been accustomed from her infancy to be treated as a queen. No stranger, on some occasions, to dissimulation; which, in that perfidious court where she received her education, was reckoned among the necessary arts of government. Not insensible to flattery, or unconscious of that pleasure, with which almost every woman beholds the influence of her own beauty. Formed with the qualities that we love, not with the talents that we admire; she was an agreeable woman



rather than an illustrious queen. The vivacity of her spirit, not sufficiently tempered with sound judgment, and the warmth of her heart, which was not at all times under the restraint of discretion, betrayed her both into errors and crimes. To say that she was almost unfortunate, will not account for that long and almost uninterrupted succession of calamities which befel her; we must likewise add, that she was often imprudent. Her passion for Darnly was rash, youthful, and excessive. And though the sudden transition to the opposite extreme was the natural effect of her ill-requited love, and of his ingratitude, insolence, and brutality; yet neither these, nor Bothwell's artful address and important services, can justify her attachment to that nobleman. Even the manners of the age, licentious as they were, are no apology for this unhappy passion; nor can they induce us to look on that tragical and infamous scene, which followed upon it, with less abhorrence. Humanity will draw a veil over this part of her character, which it cannot approve, and may, perhaps, prompt some to impute her actions to her situation, more than to her disposition; and to lament the unhappiness of the former, rather than accuse the perverseness of the latter. Mary's sufferings exceed, both in degree and duration, those tragical distresses which fancy has feigned to excite sorrow and commiseration; and while we survey them, we are apt altogether to forget her frailties, we think of her faults with less indigna-



tion, and approve of our tears, as if they were shed for a person who had attained much nearer to pure virtue.

With regard to the queen's person, a circumstance not to be omitted in writing the history of a female reign, all contemporary authors agree in ascribing to Mary the utmost beauty of countenance and elegance of shape of which the human form is capable. Her hair was black, though, according to the fashion of that age, she frequently wore borrowed locks, and of different colours. Her eyes were a dark grey, her complexion was exquisitely fine, and her hands and arms remarkably delicate, both as to shape and colour. Her stature was of an height that rose to the majestic. She danced, walked, and rode with equal grace. Her taste for music was just, and she sung and played upon the lute with uncommon skill. Towards the end of her life she began to grow fat; and her long confinement, and the coldness of the houses in which she was imprisoned, brought on a rheumatism which deprived her of the use of her limbs. No man, says Brantome, ever beheld her person without admiration and love, or will read her history without sorrow.

CHARACTER OF FRANCIS I.

With some Reflections on his Rivalship with CHARLES V.

BY ROBERTSON.

FRANCIS died at Rambouillet, on the last day of March, in the fifty-third year of his age, and the thirty-third year of his reign. During twenty-eight years of that time, an avowed rivalship subsisted between him and the emperor, which involved not only their own dominions, but the greater part of Europe in wars, prosecuted with more violent animosity, and drawn out to a greater length, than had been known in any former period. Many circumstances contributed to both. Their animosity was founded in opposition of interest, heightened by personal emulation, and exasperated not only by mutual injuries, but by reciprocal insults. At the same time, whatever advantage one seemed to possess towards gaining the ascendant, was wonderfully balanced by some favourable circumstance, peculiar to the other. The emperor's dominions were of great extent, the French king's lay more compact: Francis governed his kingdom with absolute power; that of Charles was limited, but he supplied the want of authority by address: the troops of the former were more impetuous and enterprising; those of the latter better disciplined, and more patient of fatigue. The talents and abilities of the two monarchs were as

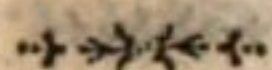


different as the advantages which they possessed, and contributed no less to prolong the contest between them. Francis took his resolutions suddenly, prosecuted them at first with warmth, and pushed them into execution with a most adventurous courage; but, being destitute of the perseverance necessary to surmount difficulties, he often abandoned his designs, or relaxed the vigour of pursuit, from impatience, and sometimes from levity.

Charles deliberated long, and determined with coolness; but, having once fixed his plan, he adhered to it with inflexible obstinacy, and neither danger nor discouragement could turn him aside from the execution of it. The success of their enterprizes was as different as their characters, and was uniformly influenced by them. Francis, by his impetuous activity, often disconcerted the emperor's best laid schemes: Charles, by a more calm, but steady prosecution of his designs, checked the rapidity of his rival's career, and baffled or repulsed his most vigorous efforts. The former, at the opening of a war or a campaign, broke in upon his enemy with the violence of a torrent, and carried all before him; the latter, waiting until he saw the force of his rival begin to abate, recovered in the end, not only all that he had lost, but made new acquisitions. Few of the French Monarchs attempts towards conquest, whatever promising aspect they might wear at first, were conducted to an happy issue; many of the emperor's enterprizes



even after they appeared desperate, and impracticable, terminated in the most prosperous manner. Francis was dazzled with the splendour of an undertaking; Charles was allured by the prospect of its turning to his advantage. The degree, however, of their comparative merit and reputation has not been fixed, either by a strict scrutiny into their abilities for government, or by an impartial consideration of the greatness and success of their undertakings; and Francis is one of those monarchs who occupies a higher rank in the temple of Fame, than either his talents or performances entitle him to hold. This preeminence he owed to many different circumstances. The superiority which Charles acquired by the victory of Pavia, and which from that period he preserved through the remainder of his reign, was so manifest, that Francis's struggle against his exorbitant and growing dominion was viewed, by most of the other powers, not only with the partiality which naturally arises from those who gallantly maintain an unequal contest, but with the favour due to one who was resisting a common enemy, and endeavouring to set bounds to a monarch equally formidable to them all. The characters of princes too, especially among their contemporaries, depend not only upon their talents for government, but upon their qualities as men. Francis, notwithstanding the many errors conspicuous in his foreign policy and domestic administration, was nevertheless humane, beneficent, and generous. He possessed dignity with-



out pride ; affability free from meanness , and courtesy exempt from deceit. All who had access to him (and no man of merit was ever denied that privilege) respected and loved him. Captivated with his personal qualities , his subjects forgot his defects as a monarch , and admiring him as the most accomplished and amiable gentleman in his dominions , they never murmured at acts of mal-administration , which in a prince of less engaging dispositions would have been deemed unpardonable. This admiration , however , must have been temporary only , and would have died away with the courtiers who bestowed it ; the illusion arising from his private virtues must have ceased , and posterity would have judged of his public conduct with its usual impartiality ; but another circumstance prevented this , and his name has been transmitted to posterity with increasing reputation. Science and the arts had , at that time , made little progress in France. They were just beginning to advance beyond the limits of Italy , where they had revived , and which had hitherto been their only seat. Francis took them immediately under his protection , and vied with Leo himself in the zeal and munificence with which he encouraged them. He invited learned men to his court ; he conversed with them familiarly , he employed them in business ; he raised them to offices of dignity , and honoured them with his confidence. That race of men , not more prone to complain when denied the respect to which they fancy themselves



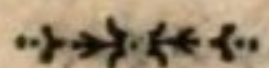
entitled, than apt to be pleased when treated with the distinction which they consider as their due, though they could not exceed in gratitude to such a benefactor, strained their invention, and employed all their ingenuity in panegyric.

Succeeding authors, warmed with their descriptions of Francis's bounty, adopted their encomiums, and refined upon them. The appellation of Father of Letters, bestowed upon Francis, has rendered his memory sacred among historians, and they seem to have regarded it as a sort of impiety to uncover his infirmities, or to point out his defects. Thus Francis, notwithstanding his inferior abilities, and want of success, has more than equalled the fame of Charles. The virtues which he possessed as a man have entitled him to greater admiration and praise, than have been bestowed upon the extensive genius and fortunate arts of a more capable, but less amiable rival.

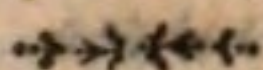
CHARACTER OF CHARLES V.

BY ROBERTSON.

As Charles was the first prince of his age in rank and dignity; the part which he acted, whether we consider the greatness, the variety, or the success of his undertakings, was the most conspicuous. It is from an attentive observation of his conduct, not from the exaggerated praises of the Spanish historians, or the undistinguished censure of the



French, that a just idea of Charles's genius and abilities is to be collected. He possessed qualities so peculiar, as strongly mark his character, and not only distinguish him from the princes who were his contemporaries, but account for that superiority over them which he so long maintained. In forming his schemes, he was by nature as well as by habit, cautious and considerate. Born with talents, which unfolded themselves slowly, and were late in attaining maturity; he was accustomed to ponder every subject that demanded his consideration with a careful and deliberate attention. He bent the whole force of his mind towards it, and dwelling upon it with a serious application, undiverted by pleasure, and hardly relaxed by any amusement, he revolved it in silence in his own breast: he then communicated the matter to his ministers; and after hearing their opinions, took his resolution with a decisive firmness, which seldom follows such slow consultations. In consequence of this, Charles's measures, instead of resembling the desultory and irregular sallies of Henry VIII. or Francis I. had the appearance of a consistent system, in which all the parts were arranged, the effects were foreseen, and the accidents were provided for. His promptitude in execution, was no less remarkable than his patience in deliberation. He consulted with phlegm, but he acted with vigour; and did not discover greater sagacity in his choice of the measures which it was proper to pursue, than fertility of genius in finding out the



means for rendering his pursuit of them successful. Though he had naturally so little of the martial turn, that during the most ardent and bustling period of life, he remained in the cabinet inactive: yet when he chose at length to appear at the head of his armies, his mind was so formed for vigorous exertions in every direction, that he acquired such knowledge in the art of war, and such talents for command, as rendered him equal in reputation and success to the most able generals of the age. But Charles possessed, in the most eminent degree, the science which is of the greatest importance to a monarch, that of knowing men, and of adapting their talents to the various departments which he allotted to them. From the death of Chievres to the end of his reign, he employed no general in the field, no minister in the cabinet, no ambassador to a foreign court, no governor of a province whose abilities were inadequate to the trust which he reposed in them. Though destitute of that bewitching affability of manner, which gained Francis the hearts of all who approached his person, he was no stranger to the virtues which secure fidelity and attachment. He placed unbounded confidence in his generals; he rewarded their services with munificence; he neither envied their fame; nor discovered any jealousy of their power. Almost all the generals who conducted his armies may be placed on a level with those illustrious personages who have attained the highest eminence of military glory; and his advantages over his rivals are to be ascribed so

manifestly to the superior abilities of the commanders whom he set in opposition to them, that this might seem to detract, in some degree, from his own merit, if the talent of discovering and employing such instruments were not the most undoubted proof of his capacity for government.

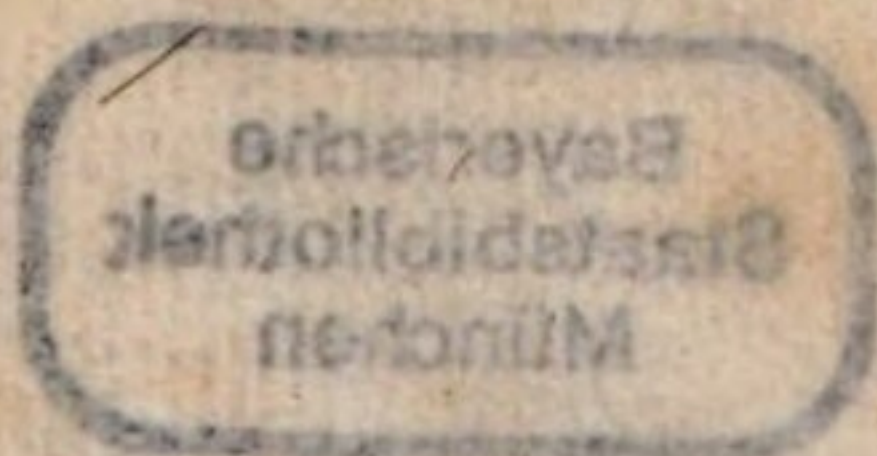
There were, nevertheless, defects in his political character, which must considerably abate the admiration due to his extraordinary talents. Charles's ambition was insatiable; and though there seems to be no foundation for an opinion prevalent in his own age, that he had formed the chimerical project of establishing an universal monarchy in Europe, it is certain that his desire of being distinguished as a conqueror, involved him in continual wars, which exhausted and oppressed his subjects, and left him little leisure for giving attention to the interior police and improvement of his kingdoms, the great objects of every prince who makes the happiness of his people the end of his government. Charles, at a very early period of life, having added the imperial crown to the kingdoms of Spain, and to the hereditary dominions of the houses of Austria and Burgundy; this opened to him such a vast field of enterprize, and engaged him in schemes so complicated as well as arduous, that feeling his power to be unequal to the execution of them, he had often recourse to low artifices, unbecoming his superior talents; and sometimes ventured on such deviations from integrity, as were dishonourable in a great prince. His insidious and fraudulent policy



appeared more conspicuous, and was rendered more odious, by a comparison with the open and undesigning character of his contemporaries, Francis I. and Henry VIII. This difference, though occasioned chiefly by the diversity of their tempers, must be ascribed in some degree to such an opposition in the principles of their political conduct, as affords some excuse for this defect in Charles's behaviour, though it cannot serve as a justification of it. Francis and Henry seldom acted but from the impulse of their passions, and rushed headlong towards the object in view. Charles's measures being the result of cool reflection, were disposed into a regular system, and carried on upon a concerted plan. Persons who act in the former manner, naturally pursue the end in view, without assuming any disguise, or displaying much address. Such as hold the latter course, are apt, in forming as well as in executing their designs, to employ such refinements, as always lead to artifice in conduct, and often degenerate into deceit.

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